

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 HEW-04
CTME-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 AGRE-00
L-03 /070 W

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R 230710Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5113
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DACCA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1029

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TBIO, TPHY, IN
SUBJ: INDIAN BAN ON EXPORT OF PRIMATES

REF: STATE 071016

1. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE PRESENT GUB ATTITUDE TOWARD THE EXPORTATION OF RHESUS MONKEYS WOULD BE. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY FILES, IN 1976 THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERAGENCY PRIMATE STEERING COMMITTEE, DR. BENJAMIN BLOOK, VISITED BURMA TO DISCUSS WITH GUB OFFICIALS THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING MONKEYS FROM BURMA FOR BIO-SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES. UNFORTUNATELY, NONE OF THE PRESENT EMBASSY STAFF HAS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF DR. BLOOD'S CONVERSATIONS WITH THE GUB ON THIS SUBJECT. IN HIS LETTERS TO THE EMBASSY, DR. BLOOD WRITES THAT OFFICIALS HE CONTACTED EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE PROJECT. AFTER HIS VISIT THE EMBASSY SUBMITTED TO THE GUB MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSAL PROVIDED BY DR. BLOOD, BUT THERE HAS BEEN
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NO FURTHER GUB RESPONSE. WE ALSO NOTE FROM THE FILES THAT THE GUB AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME REJECTED A PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT US-BURMESE SURVEY OF BURMA'S MONKEY POPULATION.

2. THE EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT THE GUB WOULD EVER EXPORT MONKEYS IN THE AMOUNTS AND FOR THE PURPOSES DESIRED. (WE ARE NOT CERTAIN HOW MANY WOULD CONSTITUTE "SUFFICIENT NUMBERS ", BUT

ASSUME IT IS CONSIDERABLE). TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS DEFICIENCIES, LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES CONCERNED, AND THE GENERAL LOW ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AT THIS END WOULD POSE FORMIDABLE DIFFICULTIES. OTHER POTENTIALLY SERIOUS PROBLEMS INCLUDE RELIGIOUS CONSIDERATIONS (BURMA IS DEVOUTLY BUDDHIST) AND THE PROSPECT THAT THE RHESUS MONKEYS ARE PROBABLY LOCATED IN ONE OF THE MANY PARTS OF BURMA INFESTED WITH ANTI-GOVERNMENT REBELS, WHICH WOULD MAKE COLLECTION VERY DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE. UNLESS THE POTENTIAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS WERE SO GREAT AS TO BE A VERY POWERFUL INCENTIVE, OR SOME IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT LEADER TOOK A STRONG PERSONAL INTEREST IN PROMOTING THE PROJECT (NEITHER OF WHICH SEEMS LIKELY), WE DOUBT SERIOUSLY THAT SUCH A PROJECT COULD EVER BE CARRIED OUT SUCCESSFULLY IN BURMA.

3. DESPITE OUR LACK OF OPTIMISM, THE EMBASSY IS PREPARED TO RAISE THIS MATTER AGAIN WITH THE GUB IF THE DEPARTMENT WISHES. SHOULD A NEW APPROACH BE MADE, WE ASK THAT THE DEPARTMENT SEND ADEQUATE BACKGROUND MATERIAL FOR OUR USE.
BEAN

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